

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 02695

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, OCON, MILI, AWACS
SUBJECT: SUMMIT CONSIDERATION OF NATO AEW

REF: (A) USNATO 2511 DTG 101421ZMAR78; (B) USNATO 2376
DTG 071814ZMAR78

SUMMARY: SYG LUNS HAS SUGGESTED THAT NATO AEW MAY BE AN
APPROPRIATE SUBJECT FOR SUMMIT DISCUSSION. HE HAS ASKED
FOR PERMREP VIEWS ON MARCH 22. WHILE THERE COULD BE SOME
BENEFIT FROM SUMMIT CONSIDERATION OF NATO AEW, ON BALANCE
WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD LEAVE THIS BALL SQUARELY IN THE
DEFENSE MINISTERS' COURT. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON
GUIDANCE BY OOB BRUSSELS TIME, MARCH 20, 1978. END
SUMMARY.

1. AS REPORTED REF A, SYG LUNS SUGGESTED THAT THE
FINAL DECISION ON NATO AEW MIGHT WELL BE TAKEN BY HEADS
OF GOVERNMENT AT THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT. HE ASKED PERMREPS
TO PROVIDE THEIR VIEW ON MARCH 22 AS TO THE APPROPRIATE-
NESS OF THIS SUBJECT FOR SUMMIT CONSIDERATION.

2. BASED ON INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF LUNS'
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STAFF, WE BELIEVE LUNS WAS DELIBERATELY VAGUE ON THE
MODALITIES OF SUMMIT CONSIDERATION (E.G., CONSIDERATION
AT 13 OR AT 15, OR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE LTDP OR
AS A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM) IN ORDER TO SOLICIT VIEWS
FROM NATIONS ON THIS MATTER. THUS THE QUESTION AT HAND
IS, DOES THE US WANT NATO AEW ON THE SUMMIT AGENDA AND
IF SO, IN WHAT MANNER?

3. ON MAY 18-19, DEFENSE MINISTERS WILL ADDRESS THE PROGRAM AS A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM, AND ALSO, WE PRESUME, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE LTDP. HOWEVER, TASK FORCE 5 OF THE LTDP CONSIDERS NATO AEW ALMOST AS A GIVEN AND THEREFORE AS A BACKDROP FOR ITS OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS. THUS, WE SEE DEFENSE MINISTERIAL CONSIDERATION OF NATO AEW AS BEING CONCENTRATED WITHIN THE SEPARATE AEW AGENDA ITEM.

4. IF ALLIES DESIRE, AND ASSUMING A FAVORABLE NATO AEW DECISION BY DEFENSE MINISTERS, HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AT 13 COULD ENDORSE THE NATO AEW PROGRAM EITHER AS A SEPARATE ISSUE, OR AS A JUMPING-OFF POINT FOR ADDITIONAL LTDP IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AIR DEFENSE AREA. IN EITHER CASE, WE NOTE THAT (1) ALLIES PROBABLY WILL NOT AGREE TO SEND NATO AEW TO THE SUMMIT UNLESS THEY ARE FAIRLY CONFIDENT OF REACHING AGREEMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL; AND (2) HEADS OF GOVERNMENT LIKELY WOULD ENDORSE THEIR DEFENSE MINISTERS' JUDGMENTS AND NOT ENGAGE IN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS OF NATO AEW.

5. IN ADDITION TO POSSIBLE TREATMENT AT 13, HEADS OF GOVERNMENT COULD ADDRESS NATO AEW AT 15. WE SEE SOME BENEFIT IN SUCH TREATMENT. GREECE WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF FORMALLY WITH THE PROGRAM
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(GREECE HAS SIGNED THE SOU FOR INITIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, SEE REF B), AND THE 13 COULD IMPRESS UPON THE FRENCH THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THEY EXTEND THE OFFER TO FRANCE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT THE FRENCH MAY WELL TURN DOWN LUNS' SUGGESTION BASED UPON THEIR LONGSTANDING REFUSAL TO DISCUSS DEFENSE MATTERS AT 15.

6. FURTHER, WHILE IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT, FACED WITH SUMMIT CONSIDERATION OF NATO AEW, DEFENSE MINISTERS PROBABLY WOULD EXPEND EXTRA EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON MAY 18-19, WE DO NOT SEE ALLIES ALLOWING THIS ITEM ON THE SUMMIT AGENDA AS A MEANS OF FORCING A DECISION BY DEFENSE MINISTERS. ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON REACHING A NATO AEW DECISION AT THE DEFENSE MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND KEEP THE SUBJECT OFF THE SUMMIT AGENDA. HOWEVER, WE DO BELIEVE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT COULD ACKNOWLEDGE AND ENDORSE THE NATO AEW PROGRAM AS BACKGROUND FOR LTDP IMPROVEMENTS.

7. WE WILL NEED WASHINGTON GUIDANCE ON TREATMENT OF THIS NATO AEW/SUMMIT MATTER. ACTION REQUESTED:

WASHINGTON GUIDANCE BY OOB BRUSSELS TIME, MARCH 20, 1978.

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